

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes

March 19, 2012

[Marin Community Foundation](#)
5 Hamilton Landing, Suite 200, Novato, CA

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting scheduled for:

Tuesday, April 16th, from 3:00-5:00 p.m. @ [HHS campus](#)

Handouts:

MFPC DRAFT CalFresh Letter to Steve Kinsey and Resolution Recommendations, CalFresh Awareness Month Activities chart

Action Items:

Introduction and Welcome:

Chair Janet Brown welcomed all attendees to the meeting and recapped previous meetings and accomplishments, by sharing the following:

“Today is our first opportunity to approve a policy recommendation formulated by this council.

To briefly recap...our first meeting was only 90 days ago in December when we relaunched the Council, outlined a policy agenda, and formulated simple operational guidelines.

At the January meeting, we put up the word tool that represented a synthesis of all our work to that point, and the entire council participated in a discussion about what the feedback from that scanning tool was. We found that the kinds of problems we identified naturally fell into two strands of examination and importance: we called those two strands Healthy Access and Healthy Production.

Though we understand that true community food security integrates a broad combination of approaches in order to raise and maintain levels of nutritional health and well-being throughout an entire community, we decided that, for the present, thinking in terms of these two strands would be useful in helping us to identify problems, organize our approach, and devise solutions.

Under Healthy Access, we identified several important issues, but the overwhelming pressure to examine a new, multi-faceted approach to solving problems of food access through improvement in the CalFresh program emerged as an obvious place to begin.

Your Steering Committee and a group of representatives from this council met several times in the space between meetings to develop information about the CalFresh program and its implementation in Marin County and at the February meeting, we came to consensus on making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to designate May as CalFresh Awareness Month with the goal of aligning county efforts, increasing food access, alleviating hunger, and improving nutritional health of Marin residents.

Here we are, 90 days out, and the Steering Committee, along with input from the county agencies and individuals that will be involved and leading this effort, has formulated a resolution for your review that supports our recommendations, the case for urgent action, and the benefits of joining with other California counties in a coordinated effort to improve CalFresh enrollment.

If approved, this will be our first step in creating a framework for action for the County around issues affecting food, diet, health, and quality of life, for Marin residents, and in supporting a cross-discipline, systems approach to problem solving that solves more than one problem without creating new ones.

In addition, the very fact that this council began wide ranging and timely discussions around improving enrollment in the CalFresh program and around linking this effort to the combined efforts of other California counties, has played a role in stimulating cross-agency thinking and consideration of ways to constellate resources in order to generate improved outcomes.

Remarks by Wendy Todd, Marin Community Foundation:

Wendy Todd, Program Director of Marin Community Foundation, thanked the Council for the work that it is engaged in, and congratulated the Council on the progress it has made so far. Wendy mentioned that MCF has a toolkit for organizations addressing policy around food systems on their website, but that coordinated “political will” has been needed to activate and make movement on food related policies. Wendy is excited about the CalFresh focus of the Council’s initial steps. She and MCF are grateful to the Council for its time and dedication in this arena.

MFPC Draft CalFresh Recommendations:

Chair Janet Brown asked for comments from Council Members on the CalFresh DRAFT Letter to Steve Kinsey and Resolution Recommendations document. Council Members shared questions and revisions ranging from grammatical clarification to content revisions such as dropping reference to Food Stamps and including mention of the myths and fears surrounding CalFresh enrollment. The need to prioritize literacy in the language of the document was brought up later in the meeting, to increase clarity of message. Chair Janet Brown agreed to make all suggested revisions and the Steering Committee agreed to send out the revised CalFresh Recommendations document for Council approval the following day.

The council reached consensus and agreed to send this revised document (pending the approval of all discussed revisions) to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Later in the meeting Council Member Liza Crosse spoke about the status of the resolution with the Board. Liza reported that Steve Kinsey is happy to have the resolution on the agenda of the meeting on the last Tuesday in April (4/30/13). Liza explained that the Council will have 3-5 minutes to speak on behalf of the resolution, during which she thought it appropriate for a spokesperson for the Council, possibly Chair Janet Brown, to provide some context for the Marin Food Policy Council, and for another representative to review the resolution. Potential representatives discussed were Marty Graff, a social services representative, or a CalFresh recipient. Claudia from the video viewed at the February meeting was suggested as a potential representative, and Council Members Victoria Vasquez and Alexandra Danino agreed to contact Claudia. Liza added that a show of support from other Council Members, even if they don't speak on behalf of the resolution, would be positive and indicative of a united and active Food Policy Council. Council Members agreed to this importance, and will try to attend the meeting on April 30th, where possible.

CalFresh Awareness Month Activities:

Council Member Rebecca Smith shared the CalFresh Awareness Month Activities chart as an early draft. The following points were discussed:

- The opportunity to train application assisters, both volunteer as well as paid staff assisters are eligible for training assistance.
- Council Member Richard Waxman reminded the Council of a previously expressed concern around having insufficient resources and infrastructure to support increased CalFresh enrollment. Council Member Marty Graff agreed that that concern still exists, and that they will address it by paying staff overtime as well as streamline the processing internally. Marty explained that things are limited by the fact that eligibility has to be determined by County eligibility workers.
- Kaiser's grant to raise awareness around CalFresh – the Council agreed to look into existing efforts so as not to redo what is already being done.
- SF "CalFresh-in-a-Day" – Council Member Marty Graff explained San Francisco's event and the potential of a Marin version was discussed. Council Member Leah Smith suggested having application assisters be trained in how to prepare applicants for one day enrollment events, in addition to other topics they are trained in.
- Education about healthy eating – Council Member Susan Martinelli asked if and how education about nutrition and healthy food is being incorporated into CalFresh Awareness. Council Member Rebecca Smith shared that the Nutrition Wellness Program is a good resource for nutrition education. Oscar Guardado is the esteemed health educator for the program and can provide nutrition education to the CalFresh eligible population. Council Member Richard Waxman replied that healthy living education happens at food pantries and Council Member Leah Smith shared that the Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) offers free farmers market tours for school groups.

Rebecca asked that Council Members be in touch with her if their organization or community wants to be involved in CalFresh Awareness Month activities. It would be a good opportunity to bring CalFresh Awareness and education back to their respective groups, and it was encouraged to send teams of at least two individuals who are invested in the group (to facilitate a "train the trainer" experience), in order to retain the knowledge and skills gained.

HEAL mini-grant for CalFresh enrollment support:

Council Member Rebecca Smith summarized the HEAL mini-grant funds available for projects that align with the HEAL Strategic Framework, and shared the proposed allocation of the funds to be used before June 30th, as follows:

- \$4,500 for training stipend incentives for application assister training, and
- \$5,000 for AIM's Market Match program.

Council Member Leah Smith shared background on Market Match. Last year, the program matched a swipe of up to \$20 of a CalFresh card with \$20 of tokens to be used at a farmers market – person, per market. Data suggests that matching \$10 is more effective at reaching more people, so this year Market Match will match \$10 (per person, per market), beginning in late April-early May. The suggestion came up for education surrounding CalFresh enrollment to be made at the information booths at farmers markets where tokens are obtained. The question about donating to the program was also brought up, both for individual donors as well as on a larger philanthropic level.

The Council reached consensus to approve the allocation of \$4,500 for training stipend incentives for application assister training, and \$5,000 to reinvigorate AIM's Market Match program.

Revisit Council priorities for learning:

Chair Janet Brown re-introduced the priorities for learning identified at the January meeting as:

- **Healthy Access** (Leads: Marty Graff, Sheila Kopf, Joseph Pierutoski, Alexandra Danino)
 - CalFresh
 - Food Banks
 - Congregate Meals/Home Delivery
 - Support/Education
 - Empowering people to take care of themselves
 - Expanding programs
 - Taxing schemes and supporting regional screening
 - Health
- **Production** (Leads: Stacy Smith, Janet Brown, and David Lewis)
 - Community garden
 - School garden
 - Open space
 - Edible landscaping
 - Local Farms
 - Measure A

Council Member Terrie Green reminded the Council of an Access priority of increasing farmers markets and healthy retail options, which was added to the list.

Chair Janet Brown shared the following remarks about the topic of production:

In order to maintain a balanced approach in the development of a sustainable food system that serves all residents, the Council had decided to begin with Healthy Access, and to alternate between Healthy Access and Healthy Production throughout the policy development process. Equity is a key value to this work if the result is to be a sustainable food system in which, “the people are feeding themselves within a pattern that can be repeated from generation to generation.”

The Council discussed moving on to learn about Production at the next meeting. Chair Janet Brown suggested that Council Members review the existing policies in the Countywide Plan Food and Ag Element looking for policies in line with the Council’s list of Production priorities. Council Members Susan Martinelli and Leah Smith volunteered to do this. Chair Janet Brown then suggested that the Steering Committee would send out a link to the Countywide Plan Food and Ag Element with some instructions, asking all Council Members to read through it looking for aligned policies. The Council agreed to this suggestion.

The meeting wrapped up just after 5 pm with the following remarks from Chair Janet Brown:

“It is not easy to cross boundaries to adopt a whole-systems approach to health. It means leaving the areas we know well and venturing into fields where we have to depend on the expertise of others. It means learning unfamiliar concepts and mastering new tools to engage complexity. It means asking people to take health into account in making decisions that usually depend on other considerations. It may provoke controversy. It may make people we approach uneasy and even angry. It requires patience, imagination, courage, integrity, and a sense of humor.”

- Dr. Richard Levins, John Rock Professor of Population Science, Harvard School of Medicine

The Steering Committee said that it would send out a calendar of next meetings to the group. The meeting concluded.

Next Meeting:

- Set for Tuesday, April 16th, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm returning to the [HHS campus](#)
- Steering Committee will meet to plan for next meeting